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NOTICE.

The STAMPED REGISTER is now regularly published; and, therefore, it can be sent to any part of the Kingdom, postage free.

TO THE

EARL OF CHICHESTER,

On his Speech at the Lewes Meeting, on the 9th instant.

Kensington, 14 January 1822.

MY LORD,

I HAVE no desire to cavil and carp at what fell from your Lordship at the Meeting at Lewes; but, there were some things uttered by you, which convinced me, that you possess a very limited knowledge, if any knowledge at all, as to the means necessary to extricate the country out of its present difficulties; and, particularly, that you had not yet brought your mind to contemplate the probable effects upon the *Aristocracy*, which the "general working of events" has in store.

Upon these subjects, therefore, it is my intention to offer you, or, rather, the *public*, some remarks; for, I dislike disappointment too much to indulge the hope, that a person so lofty-minded as your Lordship can condescend to read any thing contained in a paper bearing my name.

Your Lordship disapproved of the Meeting, and of all such Meetings, for more reasons than one; but, one was, that those Meetings tended to excite *false hopes* in the farmers; tended to make them look to the Government for *relief*, when it could afford them none; tended to make the farmers rely on the acts of the Government, rather than on their own *individual exertions*, in which

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you were sure the *only* remedy was to be found.

On this idea as to the efficacy of *individual exertions* I remarked pretty fully at the *dinner*, which took place after the Meeting, at which I was sorry your Lordship did not attend, and to have attended at which would have done you no discredit. But, there is a remark which I wish now to add, relating to this part of your speech. Trifling causes frequently produce mighty effects; but, never were mighty evils yet known to be cured by trifling remedies. In the former case, the cause, though little in the beginning, becomes, in the end, adequate to the effect; but, in the latter case, the cause must be efficient from the outset, or no cure can be produced. The million of pounds, borrowed in the year 1694, has, at last, produced what we now behold; but, what would any one think of a remedy which was to effect a cure in 1950!

If, indeed, the evil were of a nature to defy all human means of mitigation; if it were the consequence of visitations from Heaven; if it were an evil to which, from our very nature, we are liable. Then, indeed, we might be reasonably told that to meet and to pray to the Government for relief were useless. If the fault were in the farmers themselves, then they might with propriety be told to take patiently the reward of their misconduct. But, when the evil has arisen directly and visibly from *acts of power*, and solely from those acts, surely, that is a strange state of things, in which it can be unreasonable for them to apply to that same power for relief from the evil. The King's prime Minister said, about two years ago, quoting the words of GOLDSMITH,

"How few, of all the ills mankind endure,
Are those that Governments can cause or cure."

This was a neatish way of getting out of the scrape! The observation is *false*; and even

ridiculously false, as applied to mankind in general ; because it is notorious, that Governments can, and do, make a people happy, or miserable ; rich, or poor ; enslaved or free. But, as applicable to our case, it is so flagrantly false, that one wonders how any man could find face sufficient to put forth the words. Not only is the mass of evil now felt to be traced to acts in the statute book ; but, there are on record the remonstrances of the people against those acts, and the punishments inflicted on hundreds who were most forward in the making of those remonstrances. So that this remark of the poet, always false, is, as applied to our case, notoriously and impudently false.

The motive for these anxious endeavours to persuade the sufferers, that *the government* has had no hand in producing the suffering, is evident enough ; but, these endeavours will not succeed. The "*sudden transition from war to peace*" has lost its power of deceiving. All the arts of a most

corrupt press have been baffled by the force of the suffering. To acts of the government the evil *is*, and the evil *will be*, imputed ; and, the natural consequences will, and must, follow.

But, it is on the other topic, mentioned in the first paragraph of my letter, that I am most desirous to make a few remarks ; namely, on the effects, which, as it appears to me, the "general working of events" has in store with regard to the *Aristocracy*, and with regard to which effects your Lordship does not seem to have formed the slightest anticipation. Besides the general tone of your speech, you, upon some marks of *applause* having been drawn forth by you (from some dependent most likely), observed, that you "*did not come there to be applauded*;" which, certainly, was as much as to say, that you *despised* the applause you had received. This really was loftiness on the tip-toe. BURKE, who owed his enormous pensions to his abuse of the people, said, that the king

held his crown in *contempt* of a part of his subjects, at least. This was from an insolent pension-hunter; but, still, he was speaking of *another*, and not of himself. The present king did not tell the rabble, even the rabble, in Ireland, that he did not go amongst them to be applauded. He put the *shamrock* in his hat in Dublin; and, he even *returned the cheers* of the soldiers on the shores of the Isle of Wight. His love of popular applause is well known; and, in my judgment, it is not only the best trait in his character, but the best trait that can be seen in the character of any king.

It often happens to mortals, that they choose precisely the wrong time for doing that which they do; and, I am of opinion, that your Lordship has chosen precisely the wrong time for showing this uncommon degree of disregard for the opinions of the people, and especially for that description of them whom you met at Lewes. No matter to what cause it be owing, but, the fact

certainly is, that the people are not, at this time, disposed to think that a Lord, or a Baronet, or a Squire, or a Parson, is more worthy of respect than another man, merely on account of his *title*. Titles and rank have lost their power in a surprising degree within the last thirty years. A man, formerly an Exciseman at this very town of Lewes, and who, perhaps, had been insulted by some titled persons, did, of himself, a great deal in the producing of this effect. More has been produced by the events of the mad war against France; but, the greater part, after all, by the titled persons themselves. At any rate, the effect has been produced. Therefore it appears to me *unwise*, to say the very least of it, to add wantonly to this generally prevalent indisposition to yield respect to fictitious distinctions. To desire to add to men's hatred of us may be founded, in some cases, in reason; but to add to their *contempt* of us, is, surely, a desire founded in no reason that

the mind of man has ever hitherto been able to discover.

When the *Six-Acts* were under discussion, LAWYER PLUNKET discovered, as a reason for further and most horrible shackles on the press, that the people *now understood matters of state better than they formerly did*; that they had *got nearer to the government*; that they had taken, as we often express it, *a peep behind the curtain*. A very good reason for *mending the government*, for making it *fit to be seen*: for making it such as to set scrutiny at defiance; but, a very bad reason for passing *Six-Acts*. The real good of the thing was, however, that, while laws were to be passed to defend the government against this prying of the people, now become *too learned*, the *education project* was applauded to the skies! Not content with the Bible Societies, the Lancastrian and the National Schools, there was, in the hands of the famed Mr. Brougham, a project for extending the cares of the parliament even to *Grannies*

Schools! Our plodding, pudding and meat eating forefathers held it to be absurd to expect the young birds to feed the old ones; but this great blazing Northern light had discovered that the children were the properest persons in the world to teach their parents, not only reading and writing, but morality and religion into the bargain, and, moreover, to give them a relish for potatoes and water porridge! And, on goes the work of "*education*," while acts are passed, expressly and avowedly, *to prevent the people from reading!*

Read they have, however, and read they do. That which is *obtruded* upon them, they let in at one ear and out at the other; but, that which they *seek*, they well remember. It is now too late to undo this education business. To *unlearn* that which we have learnt is, as Mr. PAINE observes, impossible. The main part of the common people are even *better informed* than the nobility, gentry and clergy. These have *not read*

the things which have enlightened the former. The present difficulties and distresses have come upon the latter by *surprise*, while they have been fully anticipated by every weaver-boy in the kingdom. And, it is in this state of things that Mr. CANNING would send us back to the days of the *Curfew*. Instead of making the laws overtake the age, he would drive back the age. Like the miser in the play, instead of *letting out* the old footman's coat to make it fit the new one, he cries, "no, Sirrah! you shall be *taken in*." This poet of "the pilot that weathered the storm;" this describer of the "*revered and ruptured Ogden*," at which brilliant sally of wit the HOUSE *laughed* so heartily; this Knight of the *Curfew* gave his besotted crew at Liverpool, only about twenty months ago, a set dissertation on the *immortality of the order of things as it then stood*! Of all the tribe of "statesmen," there is no one that will now find himself in greater difficulty than this hero of the *Curfew*. His being

out of place will be no benefit to him. He has been (at Liverpool I mean) too saucy to be forgotten, even though he were now condemned to silence, which he must be, or do one of two things, namely, *confess his errors*, or, make a *grander exhibition of his folly than he has ever hitherto made*. Where is his "*sun of prosperity*," which was, in 1815, "*hidden, for a moment, behind a cloud, only to burst forth with more splendour than ever?*" Where is his vote that was to "*settle the question for ever?*" Where is his measure that was to "*extinguish the accursed torch of discord*" by making the people pay *sixpence* for that reading which they had before got for *two-pence*? Where is now his resolution to "*drive at the whole herd in order to get at one mischievous beast that he had in his eye?*"

Unhappily for the ancient families it is to men like this that they have listened, that they have given power, that they have committed the safe keeping of their titles and

estates. Such men would naturally act as they have acted ; and the consequences have been such, and will be such, and none but such, as were to be expected.

It is curious enough, that, while it has been the fashion to endeavour to keep the common people at a greater distance than ever from persons of rank ; to treat them as "*lower orders*" and "*peasantry*," a base insult never before offered to Englishmen ; while this new-fashioned phraseology has been introduced, and applied to all the laborious classes, including farmers and tradesmen ; while all these have been looked at with the keenest jealousy and kept at a greater distance than ever, the race of loan-jobbers, stock-jobbers, jews, and paper-money makers, and nabobs, have been hugged to your very bosoms ! The wise guardians of your titles and estates have made a noise, an out-cry, as if the world were going to be at an end, because the people prayed that *seat-selling* might be enquired into ; and the

Knight of the Curfew called upon all around him to "*make a stand against democratical encroachment.*" Make a stand ! make a stand ! make a stand ! echoed and re-echoed through the walls of St. Stephen's. But, all this while the pretty gentlemen seem to have wholly overlooked the *encroachments* of the loan-jobbers and the nabobs, though these were of a much more formidable nature than those of the "*democracy*," aiming, as they did, not only at the *seats*, but at the *estates themselves*, a very large part of which the paper-money crew have already got into their actual and known possession. Your Knights of the Curfew could most effectually make a stand against the unarmed reformers at Manchester, but they could not prevent *one single family of loan-jobbers* from grasping *three noblemen's estates and five estates of ancient country gentlemen* ! This, too, being a mere *specimen* of the general workings of the system, which workings have now received a

triple force from the recently adopted measures of the Knights of the Curfew, to whom you have committed the guardianship of titles and your estates.

Why, my Lord, here is a *revolution*; a real revolution; and, if it go on for only five years, a much more radical one than that which took place in France. There are many of the nobility that receive money out of the taxes; but, many do not; and, as to the second order of them and what is called the gentry, they cannot nearly all be upheld by this means. All who are not upheld by this means *must come down*. The Knights of the Curfew have passed the sentence, and it is a sentence that quietly executes itself. Poverty never yet begat partizans. The new manners of the ancient families have put the mass of the people at an immeasurable distance from them. Haughtiness may be repaid with fear, but never was, and never will be, with affection. So that there appears to be nothing

to defend the very last estate from the grasp of the paper-tribe.

Under such circumstances it appears surprising that the nobility should not endeavour *to conciliate the people*, while they have the means of conciliation in their hands; or, at least, it would appear surprising, if one had not witnessed the events of the last thirty years. Your Lordship knows, I suppose, that the old Bourbon government was overset by its adhering to the paper-tribe instead of yielding *in time* to the people; or, even to this hour, you may think, that a whole people, *who had never read at all*, had been roused into action by the *writings of philosophers*! If you can believe this, you may also believe, that the "trash" writings of the present day have done all the mischief and created all the approaching danger. But, it happens unfortunately for this hypothesis, that the people, "*the basest populace*," as the Knights of the Curfew call them, are all *quiet as lambs* just at the time

when the greatest danger has made its appearance. This danger comes just when the Knights have subdued all *your foes*, domestic as well as foreign! The people cannot even *meet*, and *Napoleon is dead*. And yet the danger is greater than ever! The *real struggle is yet to come!*

The question is simply this: shall the funds be reduced to almost nothing; or shall the nobility lose their estates. This is what, nineteen years ago, I said it would come to; I have been saying the same from that day to this; and now the question is *actually put for the nation's decision*. If any one imagines, that the *mass of the people* will have nothing to do in the deciding of this question, he is very much deceived. They will have a great deal to do with it; and, as one of them, I will state to your Lordship what my view is. It is this; that, if we have our rights, I am for reducing the funds; if not, I am for the Jews; being quite satisfied, that we should soon obtain them

from the children of Israel; and being well taught by experience to expect, in case the funds be first reduced, nothing in the way of concession from the other quarter. The Committee of the Lords, in their report of 1817, *accused* the Reformers of the *crime* of calling the fundholder "a *rapacious creature*." We repent, my Lord. We kiss the rod. We will call him a "*rapacious creature*" no more. We will call him the "*public creditor*." We will say that he lent his money to the nation "*in the hour of need*" to enable it to defend itself against revolution, against plunder, robbery, murder and rape; and, to use the emphatical expressions of the late pure and pious GEORGE ROSE, to defend itself against atheism and to preserve the "*blessed comforts of religion*." We will insist, that he has "a *mortgage*" upon every acre of land, every tree, every brick and every tile. We will maintain, that "*national faith*" is the only source of *prosperity*; and we will,

with Mr. Baring, boldly say, that the *debtor* shall have no excuse for not continuing to pay, "as long as he have any thing to pay with." O, Lord! Away go the estates!

I am, my lord, perfectly serious as to this matter. I am convinced, that we should do infinitely better with the Israelites, if we are to have no reform of the *Commons' House*. And, besides, the estates would be *continually shifting from hand to hand* after the first transfer had been completed. I like the Debt; I like all the expensive establishments; I like all the items of expenditure. I always said, that the Debt was the *peoples' best ally*. I always said, that that was a *friend* that would never desert us 'till we were safely landed on the shores of reform. Nor will it. It will give us reform almost immediately; or, it will give it us before the third transfer of estates shall have taken place; and even that will not require many years.

In the meanwhile it will be by

no means unamusing to see what capers the Jews will cut when they get into the parks and mansions and abbeys and priories! Scores of Stock-jobbers who did not know a fox from a deer or a hare from a pole-cat, are now become country-squires. A couple of army-tailors engross the east and west ends of Berkshire; and Stewart of the Courier, whom the printers' devils call *Dan Stewart*, is, I see, to be *high sheriff* of Oxfordshire and is got into a *Park*, though, only a very few years ago, he was, not a taylor, but a *taylor's trotter*! It is delightful to see these things. The punishment of the Sir Pompous Jolterheads is so just, so appropriate, so precisely what they deserve. They will now be taught the effect of wars for "social order and our holy religion." Dan Stewart will explain this matter when the Sir Pompouses of Oxfordshire meet him at the assizes. He will show them as clear as day-light, that they ought not to grudge the loss of their estates for the sake of

upholding Castlereagh's "*Social System*." Dan is a great Doctor in these matters, and he will make it out to the satisfaction of any Jolterhead that ever lived, that estates are nothing at all when compared to the suppression of "*sedition and blasphemy*." Nay, he will prove, that it is "*sedition and blasphemy*" to wish to keep an estate, if it be demanded in the cause of "*social order and our holy religion*."

The scenes which are now before us, I have been patiently waiting for, for many years past. But, what we behold now are a mere nothing to what we shall behold *this day two years*. If the stern-path-of-duty men persevere (and, God give them courage to do it!) rents will, by January 1824 have nearly ceased. The farmer's waste change will be gone, and the whole of the proceeds of his crop will be absorbed by food and raiment for himself, and labourers, taxes, and rates. The tax-gatherer will draw away *all*, except what will be abso-

lutely necessary to feed, to keep in working condition, those who till the land; and this result is, I again and again say, to be prevented only by a *reform of the Commons' House of Parliament*, which would put the mass of the people on the side of the present possessors of large estates.

This, my Lord, is a plain, common-sense view of the matter. It savours not at all of the metaphysical stuff of Mackintosh or of the obsolete rubbish of Davis Giddy and the Knight of the Curfew. Landlords may *seize*, they may *eject*; but, they will get *no rents* by 1824. This, however, is a subject not to be treated of in the tail of a Letter, intended solely to express to your Lordship without meaning any disrespect towards you, my reasons for believing, that this is not the time for persons of the order to which your Lordship belongs to show a disregard for the opinions and feelings of the people.

I am, my Lord,
Your Lordship's most obedient
And most humble Servant,
WM. COBBETT.

LORD FITZWILLIAM.

THE next Register will contain a Letter from me to this Nobleman, and to that Letter, being, as it will be, a Letter of *prophecy*, I beg leave to *bespeak the attention of the public*, a thing which I very seldom do, and which I should not do now, were I not convinced that this is a subject of the utmost importance to landlords, to tenants, and to every class in the community. The propriety of writing this intended Letter has been suggested by the following Article, which has appeared in all the newspapers.

“ NOBLE CONDUCT OF EARL
FITZWILLIAM.

“ On Wednesday last, Earl FITZWILLIAM gave a dinner at Milton House, near Peterborough, to the farmers who hold lands under him in this neighbourhood, to which they had previously been invited by circulars from his Lordship's steward, WILLIAM SIMPSON, Esq. Before the tenants were introduced to the dining-room, the Noble Earl stated to them that he had taken their present situation and prospects into his most serious consideration. He knew that, in times like these, it was impossible they could be enabled to pay their present rents; and he had been further assured of this by the can-

did communications of some of his tenants, who had kept regular accounts of the receipts and expences of their farms. He was perfectly satisfied in his own mind, that the reduced price of the produce of the land was now permanently established, since sovereigns and shillings had become the circulating medium. His Lordship properly considered the interests of the landlords and tenants as mutual; and said he was aware that the latter had embarked capitals upon their farms, for which and their labour it was just and fair they should be remunerated. But he would guard them against the delusion that the price of corn would rise; he was fully of opinion that it would not; it might fluctuate according to seasons, but in no material degree; and no alterations in the corn-laws could possibly have the effect of raising its prices. This being the decided conviction of the Noble Lord, (for he stated his belief that the average price of corn in the years 1792, 1794, and 1795, would be about the standard at which it would now keep) he had been induced to lower his rents, to meet, in some degree, the exigency of the times. His Lordship then informed his guests, that they would find sealed letters on their respective seats in the dining-room, stating the rents that had been fixed upon for their farms, which he trusted would prove satisfactory to them. In conclusion, the Noble Earl for-

cibly recommended that the *labourer* should have fair and sufficient wages, to enable him to *live, and live well*, and to support his family without applying to the parish to make up for deficient wages; for nothing, argued his Lordship, tended to degrade the labourer more in his own estimation, than obliging him to apply for parochial relief. We understand from creditable authority, that the reduction the Noble Lord has made to his tenants is from 45 to 35 per cent including 15 per cent. which was remitted in 1815. An excellent dinner was provided, which was partaken of by about eighty tenants. Lord MILTON presided, and addressed them in a most able and eloquent speech, enlarging upon the observations made by his noble father. Many excellent toasts were drank, and several songs added to the conviviality of the party."

Now, while I by no means deny that this conduct is worthy of the epithet above affixed to it, I am quite sure that his Lordship is in the very night of error as to what is about to take place. I am sure, that he will (if the stern-path men *go on*) be compelled to *lower his rent again and again*; and, at last, to take *no rent*, or to take *his farms into his own hands*. Of this I am *certain*; and, though his Lordship, who chooses guides and supporters like Mackintosh and

Scarlett, will, doubtless, turn deaf ear to my positions, I by no means despair of *proving* it to the perfect satisfaction of the "*de-luded*" disciples of my "*wild and visionary*" school, who have so long and so patiently listened to the doctrines of a "*designing agitator*."

SUSSEX JOURNAL.

(Continued from Register of 12 Jan. 1822, page 121.)

LEWES, Tuesday, 8 Jan. 1822.

—Came here to-day, from home, to see what passes to-morrow at a Meeting to be held here of the Owners and Occupiers of Land in the Rapes of Lewes and Pevensey.—In quitting the *great Wen* we go through *Surrey* more than half the way to Lewes. From Saint George's Fields, which now are covered with houses, we go, towards CROYDON, between rows of houses, nearly half the way, and the whole way is *nine miles*. There are, erected within these four years, *two entire miles of stock-jobbers houses on this one road*, and the work goes on with *accelerated force*! To be sure; for, the taxes being, in fact, tripled by Peel's Bill, the fundlords increase in riches; and their accommodations increase of course. What an at once horrible and ri-

diculous thing this country would become, if this thing could go on only for a few years! And, these rows of new houses, added to the *Wen*, are proofs of *growing prosperity*, are they! These make part of the *increased capital of the country*, do they! But, how is this *Wen* to be *dispersed*? I know not whether it be to be done by knife or by caustic; but, dispersed *it must be*! And this is the *only* difficulty, which I do not see the *easy* means of getting over.—Aye! these are dreadful thoughts! I know they are; but, they ought not to be banished from the mind; for they will *return*, and, at every return, they will be more frightful. The man who cannot coolly look at this matter is unfit for the times that are approaching. Let the interest of the Debt be once well reduced (and that must be sooner or later) and then what is to become of *half a million* at least of the people congregated in this *Wen*? Oh! precious “Great Man now no more!” Oh! “Pilot that weathered the Storm!” Oh! “Heaven-born” pupil of Prettyman! Who, but him who can number the sands of the sea, shall number the execrations with which thy memory will be loaded!—From London to Croydon is as

ugly a bit of country as any in England. A poor spewy gravel with some clay. Few trees but elms, and those generally stripped up and villanously ugly.—Croydon is a good market town; but is, by the funds, swelled out into a *Wen*.—Upon quitting CROYDON for GODSTONE, you come to the *chalk hills*, the juniper shrubs and the yew trees. This is an extension Westward of the vein of chalk which I noticed (in page 92, present volume) between BROMLEY and SEVEN-OAKS. To the Westward here lie Epsom Downs, which lead on to Merrow Downs and Saint Margaret’s Hill, then, skipping over Guildford, you come to the Hog’s Back, which is still of chalk, and at the West end of which lies Farnham. With the Hog’s Back this vein of chalk seems to end; for then the valleys become rich loam and the hills sand and gravel till you approach the Winchester Downs by the way of Alresford.—GODSTONE, which is in Surrey also, is a beautiful village, chiefly of one street with a fine large green before it and with a pond in the green. A little way to the right (going from London) lies the vile rotten Borough of *Blechingley*; but, happily for GODSTONE, out of sight. At and near Godstone the gardens are all

very neat ; and, at the Inn, there is a nice garden well stocked with beautiful flowers in the season. I here saw, last summer, some double violets as large as small pinks, and the lady of the house was kind enough to give me some of the roots.—From GODSTONE you go up a long hill of clay and sand, and then descend into a level country of stiff loam at top, clay at bottom, corn-fields, pastures, broad hedge-rows, coppices, and oak woods, which country continues till you quit Surrey about two miles before you reach EAST-GRINSTEAD. The woods and coppices are very fine here. It is the genuine *oak-soil* ; a bottom of yellow clay to any depth, I dare say, that man can go. No moss on the oaks. No dead tops. Straight as larches. The bark of the young trees with dark spots in it ; sure sign of free growth and great depth of clay beneath. The wheat is here sown on five-turn ridges, and the ploughing is amongst the best that I ever saw.—At EAST-GRINSTEAD, which is a rotten Borough and a very shabby place, you come to stiff loam at top with sand stone beneath. To the South of the place the land is fine, and the vale on both sides a very beautiful intermixture of woodland

and corn-fields and pastures.—At about three miles from Grinstead you come to a pretty village, called Forest-Row, and then, on the road to UCKFIELD, you cross *Ashurst Forest*, which is a *heath*, with here and there a few birch scrubs upon it, verily the most villainously ugly spot I ever saw in England. This lasts you for five miles, getting, if possible, uglier and uglier all the way, till, at last, as if barren soil, nasty spewy gravel, heath and even that stunted, were not enough, you see some rising spots, which instead of trees, presents you with black, ragged, hideous rocks. There may be Englishmen who wish to see the coast of *Nova Scotia*. They need not go to sea ; for here it is to the life. If I had been in a long trance (as our nobility seem to have been), and had been waked up here, I should have begun to look about for the Indians and the Squaws, and to have heaved a sigh at the thought of being so far from England.—From the end of this *forest* without trees you come into a country of but poorish wettish land. Passing through the village of UCKFIELD, you find an enclosed country with a soil of a clay cast all the way to within about three miles of LEWES, when you get to

a chalk bottom, and rich land. I was at Lewes at the beginning of last harvest, and saw the fine farms of the ELLMANS, very justly renowned for their improvement of the breed of *South-Down sheep*, and the younger Mr. John Ellman not less justly blamed for the part he had taken in propagating the errors of Webb Hall, and thereby, however unintentionally, assisting to lead thousands to cherish those false hopes that have been the cause of their ruin. Mr. Ellman may say, that he *thought* he was right; but, if he had read my *New Year's Gift* to the Farmers, published in the preceding January, he could not think that he was right. If he had not read it, he ought to have read it, before he appeared in print. At any rate, if no other person had a right to censure his publications, I *had* that right. I will here notice a calumny, to which the above visit to Lewes gave rise; namely, that I went into the neighbourhood of the Ellmans to find out *whether they ill-treated their labourers!* No man that knows me will believe this. The facts are these: the Ellmans, celebrated farmers, had made a great figure in the evidence taken before the Committee. I was at WORTH, about twenty miles from Lewes. The

harvest was begun. WORTH is a woodland country. I wished to know the state of the crops; for, I was, at that very time, as will be seen by referring to the date, beginning to write my *First Letter to the Landlords*. Without knowing any thing of the matter myself, I asked my host, Mr. BRAZIER, what good corn country was nearest to us. He said Lewes. Off I went, and he with me, in a post-chaise. We had 20 miles to go and 20 back in the same chaise. A bad road, and rain all the day. We put up at the White Hart, took another chaise, went round and saw the farms, through the window of the chaise, having stopped at a little public-house to ask which were they, and having stopped now-and-then to get a sample out of the sheaves of wheat, came back to the White Hart, after being absent only about an hour and a half, got our dinner, and got back to WORTH before it was dark; and never asked, and never intended to ask, one single question of any human being as to the conduct or character of the Ellmans. Indeed the evidence of the elder Mr. Ellman was so fair, so honest, and so useful, particularly as relating to the labourers, that I could not possibly suspect him of being a cruel or hard

master. He told the Committee, that when he began business, forty five years ago, *every man in the parish brewed his own beer*, and that now, *not one man did it, unless he gave him the malt!* Why, here was by far the most valuable part of the whole volume of evidence. Then, Mr. Ellman did not present a parcel of *estimates* and God knows what; but a plain and honest statement of facts, the rate of *day wages*, of *job wages*, for a long series of years, by which it clearly appeared how the labourer had been robbed and reduced to misery, and *how the poor-rates had been increased*. He did not, like Mr. George and other Bull-frogs, *sink these interesting facts*; but honestly told the truth. Therefore, whatever I might think of his endeavours to uphold the mischievous errors of Webb Hall, I could have no suspicion that he was a *hard master*. —If, therefore, Mr. Ellman the younger have propagated the above calumny, or encouraged others to do it, let him learn from this, that such is not the way to answer those who attack him through the means of the press; and that, however great the mortification arising from such attacks, it is much better to endure it than to seek revenge by any

underhand means, and particularly by means of a calumny of this kind, which argues the contrary of frankness and manliness in the mind of the inventor or propagator.

LEWES, Wednesday, 9 Jan. 1822.

—The Meeting and the Dinner are now over. Mr. DAVIES GIDDY was in the Chair: the place the County Hall. A Mr. PARTINGTON, a pretty little oldish smart truss nice cockney-looking gentleman, with a yellow and red handkerchief round his neck, moved the petition, which was seconded by LORD CHICHESTER, who lives in the neighbourhood. Much as I had read of that great Doctor of *virtual representation* and *Royal Commissioner of Inimitable Bank Notes*, Mr. DAVIES GIDDY, I had never seen him before. He called to my mind one of those venerable persons, who administer spiritual comfort to the sinners of the “sister-kingdom;” and, whether I looked at the dress or the person, I could almost have sworn that it was the identical *Father Luke*, that I saw about twenty-three years ago, at Philadelphia, in the farce of the *Poor Soldier*. Mr. BLACKMAN (of Lewes I believe) disapproved of the petition, and, in a speech of considerable length, and also of

considerable ability, stated to the meeting that the evils complained of arose from the *currency*, and not from the *importation of foreign corn*. A Mr. DONAVON, an Irish gentleman, who, it seems, is a magistrate in this "*disturbed county*," disapproved of *discussing any thing* at such a meeting, and thought that the meeting should merely state its distresses, and leave it to the *wisdom of parliament* to discover the remedy. Upon which Mr. CHATFIELD observed; "So, Sir, we are in a *trap*. We cannot get *ourselves* out though we know the way. There are others, who have got us in, and are able to get us out, but they do not know how. And we are to tell them, it seems, that we are in the *trap*; but are not to tell them the way to get us out. I don't like long speeches, Sir; but I like common sense." This was neat and pithy. Fifty professed orators could not, in a whole day, have thrown so much ridicule on the speech of Mr. DONAVON.—A Mr. MABBETT proposed an amendment to include all classes of the community, and took a hit at Mr. CURTEIS for his speech at Battle. Mr. CURTEIS defended himself, and I thought very fairly. A Mr. WOODWARD, who said he was a farmer, carried us back to the necessity of the war against France; and told us of the horrors of plunder and murder and rape that the war had prevented. This gentleman put an end to my patience, which Mr. DONAVON had put to an extremely severe test; and so I withdrew.—After I went away Mr. BLACKMAN proposed some resolutions, which

were *carried by a great majority by show of hands*. But, pieces of paper were then handed about, for the voters to *write their names on* for and against the petition. The greater part of the people were gone away by this time; but, at any rate, there were more *signatures* for the petition than for the resolutions. A farmer in Pennsylvania having a visitor, to whom he was willing to show how well he treated his negroes as to food, bid the fellows (who were at dinner) *to ask for a second or third cut of pork if they had not enough*. Quite surprised at the novelty, but emboldened by a repetition of the injunction, one of them did say, "Massa, I wants another cut." He had it; but, as soon as the visitor was gone away, "D—n you, says the master," while he belaboured him with the "*cow-skin*," I'll make you know *how to understand me* another time!"—The signers of this petition were in the dark while the show of hands was going on; but, when it came to *signing* they knew well *what Massa meant*! This is a *petition* to be sure: but, it is no more the petition of the farmers in the Rapes of Lewes and Pevensey than it is the petition of the Mermaids of Lapland.—There was a *dinner* after the meeting at the *Star-Inn*, at which there occurred something rather curious regarding myself. When at Battle, I had no intention of going to Lewes, till on the evening of my arrival at Battle, a gentleman, who had heard of the before-mentioned calumny, observed to me that I would do well *not to go to Lewes*. That very observation made me resolve to go. I went, as a spectator, to the meeting; and I left no one

ignorant of the place where I was to be found. I did not covet the noise of a dinner of from 200 to 300 persons; and, I did not intend to go to it; but, being pressed to go, I finally went. After some previous common-place occurrences, Mr. KEMP, formerly a member for Lewes, was called to the chair; and he having given as a toast, "*the speedy discovery of a remedy for our distresses*," Mr. EBENEZER JOHNSTONE, a gentleman of Lewes, whom I had never seen or heard of until that day, but who, I understand, is a very opulent and most respectable man, proposed *my health*, as that of a person likely to be able to point out the wished-for remedy.—This was the signal for the onset. Immediately upon the toast being given, a Mr. HITCHINS, a farmer of Seaford, duly prepared for the purpose, got upon the table, and, with candle in one hand and Register in the other, read the following *garbled* passage from my *Letter to Lord Egremont*.—"But, let us hear what the younger Ellman said: "He had seen them employed in drawing beach gravel, as had been already described. One of them, the leader, worked with a bell about his neck." Oh! the envy of surrounding nations and admiration of the world! Oh! what a glorious Constitution!" "Oh! what a happy country! Impudent Radicals, to want to reform a parliament, under which men enjoy such blessings! On such a subject it is impossible (under Six-Acts) to trust one's pen! However, this I will say; that here is much more than enough to make me rejoice in the ruin of the farmers; and I

do, with all my heart, thank God for it; *seeing, that it appears absolutely necessary, that the present race of them should be totally broken up, in Sussex at any rate, in order to put an end to this cruelty and insolence towards the labourers, who are by far the greater number; and who are men, and a little better men too, than such employers as these, who are, in fact, monsters in human shape!*"

I had not the Register by me, and could not detect the garbling. All the words that I have put in *Italics*, this HITCHINS left out in the reading. What sort of man he must be the public will easily judge.—No sooner had HITCHINS done, than up started Mr. INGRAM, a farmer of Rottendean, who was the second person in the drama (for all had been duly prepared), and moved that I should be *put out of the room!* Some few of the Webb Hallites, joined by about six or eight of the dark, dirty-faced, half-whiskered, tax-eaters from Brighton (which is only eight miles off) joined in this cry. I rose, that they might see the man that they had to put out. Fortunately *for themselves*, not one of them attempted to approach me. They were like the mice that *resolved* that a bell should be put round the cat's neck!—However, a considerable *hubbub* took place. At last, however, the Chairman, Mr. KEMP, whose conduct was fair and manly, having *given my health*, I proceeded to address the company in substance as stated here below; and, it is curious enough, that even those who, upon my health being given, had *taken their hats and gone out of the room* (and amongst whom Mr. Ellman

the younger was one) *came back*, formed a crowd, and were just as silent and attentive as the rest of the company!

[NOTE, written at *Kensington*, 13 Jan.—I must here, before I insert the speech, which has appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Brighton papers*, and in most of the London papers, except the base *sinking OLD TIMES* and the brimstone-smelling *Tramper*, or *Traveller*, which is, I well know, a mere tool in the hands of two snap-dragon Whig-Lawyers, whose greediness and folly I have so often had to expose, and which paper is maintained by a contrivance which I will amply expose in my next; I must, before I insert this speech, remark, that Mr. Ellman the younger has, to a gentleman whom I know to be incapable of falsehood, *disavowed the proceeding of Hitchins*; on which I have to observe, that the *disavowal*, to have any *weight*, must be *public*, or be made *to me*. I must also remark, that, in the *Morning Chronicle*, there is an error of great consequence in the spelling of a *name*. Mr. PARTINGTON is represented as having been an actor in this scene; whereas it was a foolish young fellow named PIDDINGTON, whose father keeps an ale-house at the village of Uckfield, whose mother was a servant to the late Lord Pelham (Chichester), who is himself bailiff to a Mr. Watson, a relation of Lord Chichester, and who was, doubtless, pushed forward to bleat out his nonsense by somebody more cunning and less brazen than himself. It was thought by some, that he had *money given him* to stimulate his zeal upon this occasion; but, while this is *possible*, I am willing to acquit him on this score, and to

impute his stupid sauciness to nothing more than that desire which menials so often discover to recommend themselves to their superiors in wealth by officiously undertaking to perform what they themselves are ashamed to be seen in.—As to the provocation that I have given the Ellmans, I am, upon reflection, ready to confess that I may have laid on the lash without a due regard to mercy. The fact is, that I have so long had the misfortune to be compelled to keep a parcel of badger-hided fellows, like SCARLETT, in order, that I am, like a drummer that has been used to flog old offenders, become *heavy handed*. I ought to have considered the Ellmans as *recruits* and to have suited my tickler to the tenderness of their backs.—I hear that Mr. INGRAM of Rottendean, who moved for my being turned out of the room, and who looked so foolish when he had to *turn himself out*, is an *Officer* of Yeomanry "*Gavaltry*." A ploughman spoiled! This man would, I dare say, have been a very good *husbandman*; but the unnatural working of the paper-system has sublimated him out of his senses. That greater Doctor, Mr. PEEL, will bring him down again.—Mr. HITCHINS, I am told, after going away, came back, stood on the landing-place (the door being open,) and, while I was speaking, exclaimed, "Oh! the fools! How they open their mouths! How they suck it all in."—Suck *what* in, Mr. Hitchins? Was it honey that dropped from my lips? Was it flattery? Amongst other things, I said that I liked the plain names of *farmer* and *husbandman* better than that of *agriculturist*; and, the prospect I held out to them,

was that of a description to catch their applause!—But, this Hitchens seems to be a very silly person indeed.]

Mr. COBBETT—Gentlemen, I am extremely sorry that any thing connected with my name should have occurred to disturb the harmony of the company, of which it was not at first my intention to form a part. Very anxious to know, from my own observation, what should pass at this town to-day, I came to the town; but having satisfied that desire, I had intended, and had adopted the usual steps for, dining at the inn where I am staying. Being told by several farmers, that it was expected that I should dine here; being told that my absence would cause great disappointment to numerous persons, I came to this dinner, having, too, a perfect right to do it without any asking, and without assigning any reasons. As to the proposing of my health, if not wholly unexpected by me, it proceeded from a gentleman with whom I am wholly unacquainted; and it was a proposition (if my wishes ought to have any thing to do with the matter), the adoption of which was calculated to give me pain rather than pleasure, seeing that the gentleman who did me the honour to make the proposition did, by his manner of doing it, evidently entertain hopes connected with its effects, which hopes I feel but too sensibly my want of power to realize. But, Gentlemen, the toast having been *opposed*, and that, too, in the extraordinary manner we have witnessed, I will, at any rate, with your permission, make a remark or two on that manner. If the person who has made the opposition had been actuated by a spirit of fairness and justice, he would not have confined himself to a *detached sentence* of the paper from which he has read; but, would have taken *the whole together*; for, by taking a particular sentence, and leaving out all the rest, what

writing is there that will not admit of a wicked interpretation? As to the particular part which has been read, I should not, perhaps, if I had seen it *in print*, and had had time to cool a little [it was in a Register sent from Norfolk], have sent it forth in terms so very general as to embrace all the farmers of this county; but, as to those of them who put *the bell round the labourer's neck*, I beg leave to be now repeating; in its severest sense, every word of the passage that has been read.—Born in a farm-house, bred up at the plough-tail, with a smock-frock on my back, taking great delight in all the pursuits of farmers, liking their society, and having amongst them my most esteemed friends, it is natural that I should feel, and I do feel, uncommonly anxious to prevent, as far as I am able, that total ruin which now menaces them. But, the labourer, was I to have no feeling for him? Was not he my *countryman* too? And was I not to feel indignation against those farmers, who had had the hard-heartedness to put the bell round his neck, and thus wantonly insult and degrade the class to whose toils they owed their own ease? The statement of the fact was not mine; I read it in the newspaper as having come from Mr. Ellman the younger; he, in a very laudable manner, expressed his *horror* at it; and was not I to express *indignation* at what Mr. Ellman felt horror? That Gentleman and Mr. Webb Hall may monopolize all the wisdom in matters of political economy; but, are they, or rather is Mr. Ellman alone, to engross all the feeling too? [It was here denied that Mr. Ellman had said the bell had been put on by *farmers*.] Very well, then, the complained of passage has been productive of benefit to the farmers of this county; for, as the thing stood in the newspapers, the natural and unavoidable inference was, that that atrocious, that inhuman act,

was an act of Sussex farmers. Having, Gentlemen, made this explanation, I shall proceed to no other topic unless called upon so to do by the voice of a decided majority of the company; but, at the same time, I beg you to be assured, that I lament this occurrence only as it has been the cause of disturbing your harmony, and by no means as it relates to myself, to which I will add, that I feel no anger against those with whom the objection originated, understanding pretty well the quarter whence it did originate, and knowing how to make allowance for the irritability of mortification and chagrin. We are not, Gentlemen, to expect to enjoy the triumph of reason over conceited ignorance, without having to endure whatever vengeance the latter may have the power to inflict.

[Here a conversation took place in which the Chairman, and Cripps and others took a part, strongly urging the necessity of hearing Mr. Cobbett.]

Mr. COBBETT then resumed—I shall, then, Gentlemen, offer you a few observations on some of the topics that have this day been matter of discussion in another place; and I beg you to feel no pain at any little interruptions that I may experience, I being well satisfied that *events* will make those applaud who may now express dissatisfaction.—What a cause is this for assembling together! It has frequently happened that a particular branch of trade has been greatly injured; that, owing to some circumstance of peace or of war, of cession or of conquest, this or that branch of commerce has been almost annihilated; but, the history of the world has furnished until now no instance in which a whole body of farmers and landlords were upon the point of being overwhelmed in ruin, which, indeed, is nothing short of the breaking up of the very foundations of society. A Noble Lord, Lord

Chichester, observed to-day, that the farmers would do better to *remain at home*; for, that he was convinced, that there was no remedy but in *individual exertion*. Now, if his Lordship meant that it was right for farmers to be industrious and not to waste their time, he was right; but, surely, when they find, that, in spite of all their industry and frugality, they grow poorer and poorer, and at last see ruin staring them in the face, it becomes them, as men of good sense, to inquire into the cause and to seek for a remedy. And, as to *individual exertion* being that remedy, how can any individual exertion make head against the irresistible and all-pervading cause that is now at work? Is it meant that the farmers should retrench, that they should lessen their personal expences, that they should come down in their way of living? Why, you have retrenched, you have come down. This is already done; and, I defy any human being to point out how you, by individual exertion, are to do more than you have already done. Do the Landlords imagine that they are to continue to receive high rents out of the savings in the farmer's family expences? Do they know how small a proportion these bear, even on the most extravagant scale, to any one other branch of the tenant's outgoings? But, above all things, do they consider the *real cause* of the present distress? And, if they do, how can they imagine that its effects are to be averted or mitigated by individual exertions? The present law, commonly called Mr. Peel's Bill, does this: it triples the rent of every tenant bound by lease; it augments the amount of every *mortgage* and debt in the same proportion; it does the same as to all the taxes; it triples (as observed in print some months ago) even the toll at turnpike-gates; it is, in fact, as to all practical purposes, an act of confiscation on every man bound by lease,

mortgage bond, or other contract for time. What, against the operation of an Act like this, is to be done by *individual exertions*? The Ministers depreciate *interference*, and, by the mouth of Lord Chichester, tell you to-day, that they can *do nothing* to relieve you; for, be you assured, that what he said will be said by them. I would, Gentlemen, that *they* had not interfered, and that they did not interfere now; but have they not interfered, and do they not still interfere, by the hands of the tax-gatherer, and by means of Mr. Peel's Bill? And, here let me express my surprise, that it should have been thought proper to advise you to appeal to the *wisdom* of Parliament. To its *power*, if any one like; but, while I know a great deal better than to advise any one to say a word tending to bring that body into contempt, I must say, that considering that every evil you complain of is, at once, traced to acts of that body, it does appear to me to be rather out of place to make your appeal to its *wisdom* for redress. To its *mercy*, if some compliment must be paid to it; but, to appeal to its *wisdom*, at the very moment when you are setting forth the deplorable effects of its acts, is to say, that it has brought you into misery *knowing what it was doing*, and, in this I am convinced you do that celebrated body great injustice; for I am quite convinced that they did not mean to do what they have done. Still wisdom may, with some, be matter of taste; and with these it may be wisdom to produce a state of things, in which, while the nation is overburthened with food, it is necessary to raise taxes on the owner of the food, in order to send a part of the mouths to seek food under the scorching sun of the Cape of Good Hope; a state of things in which, while the farmer is unable to find money to employ labourers to work for his benefit, he is compelled to find

money to employ them to break stones into very small bits to make very smooth roads for others to ride and drive along; a state of things which has awakened the bright idea of producing relief to the nation and preserving the morals of the people by setting them to dig holes one day and fill them up the next; according to the estimate of these persons it may be *wisdom* to produce a state of things like this; but, according to my estimate, such a phrase, at such a time, ought not to have found its way into a Petition to Parliament. I was struck, Gentlemen, with the change of conduct in the landlords, an instance of which was evinced in the *stay-at-home* advice of which I have before spoken. I am sure, that every one recollects, that, as long as the farmers confined themselves to the adoption, in their Petitions, of the absurd reveries of Mr. Webb Hall, they were never advised to *keep at home*. Nay, it is perfectly notorious, that the landlords (beginning with those in Huntingdonshire) *expressly called upon* them to leave home, to bestir themselves, to meet, and to petition. This change of advice, then, must have a cause. The subject has been discussed; the farmers begin to see the *real cause* of their sufferings; they trace those sufferings to the *taxes*; these to the enormous standing army, the high salaries, pensions, and grants, and the still more enormous amount of the debt. The farmers in Hertfordshire have agreed to petition for a *reduction* of these; those of Lincolnshire, particularly of Holbeach, have done the same; and *now*, all of a sudden, some, at least, of the landlords, have discovered, that the farmers would do better to stay at home, and mind the plough! The fact is, Gentlemen, that many of the landlords are something else besides landlords; they are placemen and pensioners (by the by, Lord Chichester is a Postmaster-General); they *receive* taxes; they, therefore,

very naturally dislike to hear the sufferings imputed to those taxes; and, besides this, they as well as the fundholder, the mortgagee, and the my-laced and unpensioned landlord, profit, as placemen and pensioners, by the rise in the value of money, and, therefore, they would fain prevent the farmers from busy-ing themselves about matters relating to the currency; and would have them stay at home, and use individual exertion. It is become the fashion, Gentlemen, to repeat very often the assertion, that the *interests of landlord and tenant are the same*. There is more of sentiment than of truth in this observation as applied to the present state of things. For, if there be a law passed, which compels, in effect, the tenant to pay the landlord twice or three times as much rent as he contracted to pay, can any thing, with regard to that law, be more opposed than is the interest of the landlord to that of the tenant? And, that this is the state of the case can be denied by no man. For the landlord to call on the tenant to make up for his enormous losses by saving and pinching is folly; but it is something else, too; for, at this time of day, when the wild notions about Corn Bills are very nearly exploded, the landlord must know, that every lease of three or four years standing, and having as many years to run, actually enriches the landlord by the loss of the tenant, and binds the latter to the ruin of himself and family. Gentlemen, it was observed to-day by a gentleman, whose name I am told is Woodward, that the contracting of the Debt was necessary to carry on a war for the *preservation of property*. There are many, amongst whom I am one, who think that the war was wholly unnecessary for any good purpose; but, to hear said, even *now*, that it tended to preserve property, is something that I could not have expected. The war and its appendages made that debt and

those other charges which cause the taxes, which, as all men now see, are the cause of the sufferings of all classes, and which, after having crushed the other classes, one by one, are now pressing with deadly weight upon that class which hold in their hands the very sources of all national wealth and prosperity. Let any man show me even a revolution, though revolutions are by no means to be coveted, and are particularly disliked by me, and have been, as far as I have had power, most anxiously and unremittingly sought to be prevented; let any man show me even a *revolution* that has made such havoc on *property*, so direct an attack on it, so unavoidable a transfer of it, as has been made and is now making by the war, its taxes, its debts, its establishments and its terrible finishing stroke the Bill of Mr. Peel. Where is the man of all those who now, with such indulgent patience, listen to me, whose property is *now safe*? Where is the farmer whose all is not either gone or in jeopardy? Is there now any security of any kind for any thing that any man possesses? Is there any thing which any one connected with the land can regard as a stable possession? Your thoughts must answer no. You must say, that, if the Bill of Mr. Peel (the effects of the war taken into view) had declared in its preamble its intention to ruin you, it could not have been more complete in its effects. And, how stands the landlord, who has no share of the taxes? Can he call the land his *property*? Can he hope that one single acre will finally, and in a short time, fail to be transferred from him? This transfer is much quicker work than people's aversion to see their danger will let them perceive; for it takes but a very short time to transfer the whole, at the rate at which that transfer is now going on. In imminent danger, therefore, is every landlord's estate. The farmer will soon be either ruined

or safe; but, the land remains, and on it the whole weight must fall when the present renters are drained of their last shilling. The landlord has, therefore, but a short space of quiet possession left him. A piece of bacon at the mercy of half a dozen hungry ploughmen is not in greater peril than the landlord's estate at the mercy of the fundholders. Here, Gentlemen, we come to the subject of a *remedy*, which to describe in the detail I shall not attempt; but, I am confident, that there is no remedy without a *reduction of the interest of the Debt*. A Gentleman who displayed so much ability to-day (Mr. Blackman) observed, that the funds ought not to be touched, that public faith ought not to be violated. He must have meant this with mitigation of construction; for, public faith can never call on the mass of the people to pay three for one to the fundholder any more than to the placeman, pensioner, or landlord. And, as to the practicability, the thing is absolutely impossible, without a transfer of all landed estates, and then another transfer, and so on, until property become a mere empty name. Before the war, the whole of the taxes amounted to fifteen or sixteen millions a year; they now amount to fifty odd millions, between thirty and forty of which go to the affairs of the Debt. Retrenchment if you please; retrenchment by all means; but, of what avail is retrenchment, unless you retrench the Debt? To the sixteen millions and less we must return if Mr. Peel's Bill remain in force. Prices will continue to fall (the effects of particular reasons aside,) and must continue to fall, until they reach those of the nations around us; because the paper money must disappear in very great part indeed, it must disappear as common currency in May 1823, and only look at the drain of gold which will by that time have taken place from other countries. That drain will

cause prices to fall in those countries, and ours must follow. To show the inefficacy of Corn Bills, America, which has never imported a sack of corn since the country was discovered by Columbus, has since the passing of Mr. Peel's Bill, seen prices fall in the proportion of from *one hundred and fifty to forty five*; and I read in a newspaper of only the other day, that one merchant's house in Philadelphia had sent, in the course of the year, *gold* to the amount of a million of dollars to England! Here are cause and effect. England drains away gold, the American Banks, which are compelled to pay in cash, draw in their paper, and prices fall. Thus, Gentlemen, I am convinced, the thing will go on until May 1823; and, if Mr. Peel's Bill remain in full force, our taxes must come down to even less than sixteen millions a year, or all the landed estates must change owners. There are many here present, who will remember what I now say; and, I desire it to be remembered, that I now do say, that, if this Bill remain in full force to May 1823, and continue thenceforth in full force, the price of good wheat on an average of years, will not exceed, at the most, four shillings the Winchester bushel. I have, as to this great matter, always been right hitherto during the space of nineteen years of constant writing. Before the Bill of Mr. Peel was passed, I warned the Parliament of the consequences; I said, that, if unaccompanied with other measures, it would ruin tradesmen, ruin farmers, rob the mortgager, and finally strip the landlord of his estate. That prediction I addressed to Mr. Tierney, and I said, I address it to you, that I may have a name to call it by, and, if I am wrong, I desire that it may be remembered that I am wrong and that you are right. With the like desire I now call upon all here to remember, that, I now say, that,

the present measures being enforced, the average of good wheat, after May 1823, will not exceed four shillings a bushel; and that, if it do, I will be content to pass for a fool for the remainder of my life.— I have now, Gentlemen, to express the gratification I feel at the attentive manner in which you have been pleased to hear me; and to add, that, if what I have said, shall have the smallest tendency to lessen the magnitude or to shorten the duration of the distresses of any one of you, I shall deem that much more than a compensation for the trouble of coming to Lewes, and also for the momentary unpleasant personal circumstances which have taken place in this room.

BRIGHTON, *Thursday, 10 Jan. 1822.*—Lewes is in a valley of the *South Downs*, this town is at eight miles distance, to the south south-west or thereabouts. There is a great extent of rich meadows above and below Lewes. The town itself is a model of solidity and neatness. The buildings all substantial to the very out-skirts; the pavements good and complete; the shops nice and clean; the people well-dressed; and, though last not least, the girls remarkably pretty, as, indeed, they are in most parts of Sussex; round faces, features small, little hands and wrists, plump arms, and bright eyes. The Sussex men, too, are remarkable for their good looks. A Mr. BAXTER, a stationer of Lewes, shewed me a *farmer's account book*, which is a very complete thing of the kind. The Inns are good at Lewes, the people civil and not servile, and the charges really (considering the taxes) far below what one could reasonably expect.—From Lewes to Brighton the road winds along between the hills of the South

Downs, which, in this mild weather, are mostly beautifully green even at this season, with flocks of sheep feeding on them.—Brighton itself lies in a valley cut across at one end by the sea, and its extension, or *Wen*, has swelled up the sides of the hills and has run some distance up the valley.—The first thing you see in approaching Brighton from Lewes, is a splendid *horse-barrack* on one side of the road, and a heap of low, shabby, nasty houses, irregularly built, on the other side. This is always the case where there is a barrack. How soon a Reformed Parliament would make both disappear! Brighton is a very pleasant place. For a *wen* remarkably so. The *Kremlin*, the very name of which has so long been a subject of laughter all over the country, lies in the gorge of the valley, and amongst the old houses of the town. The grounds, which cannot, I think, exceed a couple or three acres, are surrounded by a wall neither lofty nor good-looking. Above this rise some trees bad in sorts, stunted in growth, and dirty with smoke. As to the "*palace*" as the Brighton newspapers call it, the apartments appear to be all upon the ground floor; and, when you see the thing from a distance, you think you see a parcel of *cradle-spits*, of various dimensions, sticking up out of the mouths of so many enormous squat decanters. Take a square box, the sides of which are three feet and a half, and the height a foot and a half. Take a large Norfolk-Turnip, cut off the green of the leaves, leave the stalks 9 inches long, tie these round with a string three inches from the top, and put the turnip on the middle of the top of the box. Then take four turnips of

half the size, treat them in the same way, and put them on the corners of the box. Then take a considerable number of bulbs of the crown-imperial, the narcissus, the hyacinth, the tulip, the crocus, and others; let the leaves of each have sprouted to about an inch, more or less according to the size of the bulb; put all these, pretty promiscuously but pretty thickly on the top of the box. Then stand off and look at your architecture. There! That's "*a Kremlin!*" Only you must cut some church-looking windows in the sides of the box. As to what you ought to put *into* the box, that is a subject far above my cut.—Brighton is naturally a place of resort for *expectants*, and a shifty ugly-looking swarm is, of course, assembled here. Some of the fellows, who had endeavoured to disturb our harmony at the dinner at Lewes, were parading, amongst this swarm, on the cliff. You may always know them by their lank jaws, the stiffeners round their necks, their hidden or *no* shirts, their stays, their false shoulders, hips and haunches, their half-whiskers, and by their skins, colour of veal kidney-suet, warmed a little, and then powdered with dirty dust.—These vermin excepted, the people at Brighton make a very fine figure. The trades-people are very nice in all their concerns. The houses are excellent, built chiefly with a blue or purple brick; and bow-windows appear to be the general taste. I can easily believe this to be a very *healthy* place: the open downs on the one side and the open sea on the other. No inlet, cove, or river; and, of course, no swamps.—I have spent this evening very pleasantly in a company of *reformers*, who, though plain

tradesmen and mechanics, know, I am quite satisfied, more about the questions that agitate the country, than any equal number of Lords.

KENSINGTON, *Friday, 11 January, 1822.*—Came home by the way of *Cuckfield, Worth, and Red-Hill*, instead of by *Uckfield, Grinstead* and *Godstone*, and got into the same road again at *Croydon*. The roads being nearly parallel lines and at no great distance from each other, the soil is nearly the same, with the exception of the fine oak country between Godstone and Grinstead, which does not go so far westward as my homeward bound road, where the land, opposite the spot just spoken of, becomes more of a *moor* than a clay, and though there are oaks, they are not nearly so fine as those on the other road. The tops are *flatter*; the side shoots are sometimes *higher than the middle shoot*; a certain proof that the *tap-root* has met with something that it does not like.—I see (Jan. 15) that Mr. CURTEIS has thought it necessary to state, in the public papers, that *he* had *nothing to do* with my being at the dinner at Battle! Who the Devil thought *he* had? Why, was it not an *ordinary*; and had I not as much right there as *he*? He has said, too, that *he did not know* that I was to be at the dinner. How should *he*? Why was it necessary to apprize him of it any more than the porter of the inn? He has said, that he did not hear of any deputation to invite me to the dinner, and, "*upon inquiry,*" cannot find, that there was any. Have *I* said that there was any invitation at all? There was; but I have not said so. I went to the dinner for my half-

crown like another man, without knowing, or caring, who would be at it. But, if Mr. CURTEIS thought it necessary to say so much, he might have said a little more. He might have said, that he *twice addressed himself to me* in a very particular manner, and that *I never addressed myself to him except in answer*; and, if he had thought "*inquiry*" necessary upon this subject also, he might have found, that, though always the first to speak or hold out the hand to a hard-fisted artizan or labourer, I never did the same to a man of rank or riches in the whole course of my life. Mr. CURTEIS might have said, too, that, unless I had gone to the dinner, the party would, according to appearances, have been very *select*; that I found *him* at the head of one of the tables, with less than *thirty* persons in the room; that the number swelled up to about *one hundred and thirty*; that no person was at the other table; that I took my seat at it; and that that table became almost immediately crowded from one end to the other. To these Mr. CURTEIS, when his hand was in, might have added, that he turned himself in his chair and listened to my speech with the greatest attention; that he bade me, *by name*, good night, when he retired; that he took not a man away with him; and that the gentleman who was called on to replace him in the chair (whose name I have forgotten) had got from his seat during the evening to come and shake me by the hand. All these things Mr. CURTEIS might have said; but the fact is, he has been bullied by the base newspapers, and he has not been able to muster up courage to act the manly part, and which,

too, he would have found to be the *wise* part in the end.—Upon looking again at the article which Mr. CURTEIS has published in the *COURIER*, I am sorry to perceive in it something that is really *not true*. He says I was pointed out to him as sitting at the head of a "*SIDE-TABLE*." The tables were both of the *same length*; both standing long-ways of the room; both of the same width; no *cross* table, no *middle* table, and, of course, no *side-table*. I sat at the head of one table, he at the head of the other; my right elbow was not more than seven feet from his left elbow. When he gave the toast "*more money and less taxes*," he turned himself towards me, and said, "That is a toast, that *I am sure, you approve of*," "Mr. Cobbett." To which I answered, "It would be made *good, Sir, if members of parliament would do their duty*."—I appeal to all the gentlemen present for the truth of what I say.—Perhaps Mr. CURTEIS, in his heart, did not like to give my health. If that was the case, he ought to have left the chair, and retired. *Straight forward* is the best course; and, see what difficulties Mr. CURTEIS has involved himself in by not pursuing it! I have no doubt that he was agreeably surprised when he saw and heard me. Why not *say*, then: "After all that has been said about Cobbett, he is a devilish pleasant, frank and clever fellow, at any rate."—How much better this would have been, than to act the part that Mr. CURTEIS has acted.—The Editors of the "*Brighton Chronicle and Lewes Express*" have, out of mere modesty, I dare say, fallen a little into Mr. CURTEIS's strain. In

closing their account (in their paper of the 15th) of the Lewes-Meeting, they say, that I addressed the company at some length, as reported in their *Supplement* published on Thursday the 10th. And then they think it necessary to add; "For ourselves, we can say, that *we never saw Mr. Cobbett until the meeting at Battle.*" Now, had it not been for pure maiden-like *bashfulness*, they would, doubtless, have added, that, when they *did see me*, they were *profuse in expressions of their gratitude to me* for having merely *named their paper* in my Register, a thing, which, as I told them, I myself had forgotten. When, too, they were speaking, in reference to a speech made in the Hall, of "one of the *finest specimens of oratory that has ever been given in any assembly*," it was, without doubt, out of pure compassion for the *perverted taste* of their Lewes readers, that they suppressed the fact, that the agent of the paper at Lewes sent them word, that it was *useless* for them to send any account of the meeting, unless *that account contained Mr. Cobbett's speech*; that he, the agent, could have sold a hundred papers that morning, *if they had contained Mr. Cobbett's speech*; but *could not sell one without it*. I myself, by mere accident, heard this message delivered to a third person by their agent at Lewes. And, as I said before, it must have been pure tenderness towards their readers that made the editors suppress a fact so injurious to the reputation of those readers in point of *taste*! However, at last, these editors seem to have triumphed over all feelings of this sort; for, having

printed off a *placard*, advertising their Supplement, in which placard no mention was made of *me*, they, grown bold all of a sudden, took a *painting brush*, and in large letters, put into their placard, "MR. COBBETT'S SPEECH AT LEWES;" so that, at a little distance, the placard seemed to relate to *nothing else*; and there was "the *finest specimen of oratory*" left to find its way into the world under the auspices of my rustic harrangue. Good God! What will this world come to! We shall, by-and-by, have to laugh at the workings of envy in the very worms that we breed in our bodies!—The *fast-sinking* OLD TIMES news-paper, its cat-and-dog opponent the NEW TIMES, the COURIER, and the Whig-Lawyer TRAMPER, called the "Travel-ler;" the fellows who conduct these vehicles; these wretched fellows, their very livers burning with envy, have hastened to inform their readers, that "they have *authority* to state that Lord Ashburnham and Mr. Fuller were not present at the dinner at Battle where *Cobbett's health was drunk*." These fellows have now "*authority*" to state, that there were no two men who dined at Battle, that I should not prefer as companions to Lord Ashburnham and Mr. Fuller, commonly called "Jack Fuller," seeing that I am no admirer of *lofty reserve*, and that, of all things on earth, I abhor a head like a drum, all noise and emptiness. These scribes have also "*authority*" to state, that they amuse me and the public too by *declining rapidly in their sale* from their exclusion of my country lectures, which have

only begun. In addition to this *The Traveller* editor has "authority" to state, that one of his papers of 5th Jan. has been sent to the Register-office by post, with these words written on it: "*This scoundrel paper has taken no notice of Mr. Cobbett's speech.*" All these papers have "authority" to state beforehand, that they will insert no account of what shall take place, within these three or four weeks, at *Huntingdon*, at *Lynn*, at *Chichester*, and other places where I intend to be. And, lastly, the editors have full "authority" to state, that they may employ, without let or molestation of any sort, either private or public, the price of the last number that they shall sell in the purchase of hemp or ratsbane as the sure means of a happy deliverance from their present state of torment.

THE MINISTRY.

It is not often that I trouble the readers with this hacknied and now insignificant subject; and I unequivocally say, that I should lament any change of Ministry that would put the smallest degree of power into the hands of such men as Brougham, Mackintosh or Scarlett, and that would expose us to the scourge of a hungry and merciless band of Edinburgh Reviewers, who, by the by, are firmly pledged to take the last crust from the hands of the labourer rather than deduct a sixpence from the enormous and unjust gains from the Jews and the loan-jobbers. However, there has now been a something going on, which is worthy of notice, because

it discovers the alarms of the system, and because of that only. Old Sidmouth, is, it is said, to go out at last to make way for the Oxford Scholar, the renowned author of the renowned Bill. How the displacing of this Addington has been accomplished, I should very much like to know! Talk of hydraulic instruments, indeed, to tear up oaks by the root! Talk of the means of removing mountains! Talk of those terrible convulsions of nature by which Islands are shaken from their base! What are these to the powers possessed by his present Majesty! CANUTE rebuked the flattery of his courtiers by shewing them that the tide would not recoil at his command; but what cannot that King accomplish, who has moved an Addington from place!

This famous old person will now have leisure to reflect and to chat a bit under the royal colonades and groves of Richmond; and, as soon as I can find the time, he and I will have a little chat together, upon the subject of his starting me from my *forme* (and not my *farm*, as erroneously printed in the last Register) and upon several other topics, which, in the hurry of official affairs, he is very likely to have forgotten, never forgetting his circular and his letter of thanks to the Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry and Magistrates, barely to mention either of which is quite sufficient.

Of more importance still is the apparent decided junction of the Grenvilles with the Ministry. CHARLES WYNN, a nephew, I believe he is, of Lord Grenville, is, they say, put in the place of CANNING at the India Board;

and, which is more material, this family of Grenville has, at last, a Duke at the head of it; a thing that has been talked of, to my knowledge, for more than twenty years past; but which until now has never been accomplished.

The view with which the Ministers have sought this junction is supposed to be this, or, at least, such is my supposition. They see, that many of their old supporters will quit them; and, indeed, they have for some time seen this. The *Woodhouses*, and even the *Gooch's*, must vote for a reduction of taxes. The *Burrèls* and many others will do the like, who never thought of doing such a thing before. I believe the Ministers would gladly walk out of their places, if that were *all*; if that were the *end*; but, short sighted as they are, as to matters in general; pretty gentlemen as they are; deeply as they are skilled in digging holes one day and filling them up the next; sudden as is that transition which they can discover from war to peace; yet, where their own immediate personal interest is at stake, they can see an inch before their noses at any rate; and it requires them to see only one inch, in order to convince them, that it is their interest to keep in their places as long as they can; and, if possible, to the last moment of their lives.

The junction, therefore, of the Grenvilles, openly and ostensibly has no mystery in its motive, but, it will fail of its object; for it is not the Grenvilles or any body else that can carry Peel's Bill into effect without a complete overthrow of the system. The Ministers flatter themselves that, as

long as they can raise the *revenue*, they can push the system on. They forget that the revenue is raised, as I clearly showed in my Letters to Landlords, not upon profits; but upon the rents of the Landlords and the capital of the Farmers; and they will soon find that no descendants from Rollo the first Duke of Normandy; no Plantagenets, or any body else, can persuade the Landlords, that they ought to yield the last hedge-stake and last inch of their estates.

Never was there a finer stroke of policy than that of the junction of the Grenvilles with Mr. Fox. It ruined the latter and his party; but it screened Pitt, while living, it gave him a monument when dead, and it has been the screen, the grand protection of his adherents and successors from that day to this. It enlisted the Edinburgh Reviewers; it brought in *Saint Horner*; and its effects will live after the junction has been dissolved; for the Whigs got *committed* in numerous cases, and on many material points in order to gratify the Grenvilles. However, this incubus, this dreadful and never ceasing load has now removed itself; and we shall see what the Whigs are manly enough to do when left to themselves.

In this view of the matter, and especially as these enormous concessions to the Grenvilles shows the distrust which the Ministers have in their former thorough paced adherents, the thing is important. I know well that nobody can do any thing to *save the system*; but it is of importance to know that the pretty gentlemen themselves begin to doubt of their own friends. It is of importance to know, that they see that a push

will be made at the taxes and high establishments. The result we know; but it is right for us to have our eye upon what the pretty gentlemen think and upon the means they make use of to parry the thrust.

There is one personage, one forlorn individual, towards whom we may, upon this occasion look with an eye of real compassion; I mean the sportful, playful, jesting gentleman, Mr. *Canning*. This pretty gentleman; this wit of all wits who could set the House in a roar upon the subject of a *revered radical's rupture*; this incomparable wit, seems, at last, to have fairly outwitted himself! What! Is the system to come to an end without the aid of this famed Anti-Jacobin; this Poet of the "Pilot that weathered the storm;" this lofty eulogist of the days of the Curfew; this grinder of all grinders of dirty doggrel; this constant reviler of the people; this hero of the seat-system, who cried with voice of Stentor, "Let us make a stand against Democratic encroachment!" If the system die without this great Doctor by its bed-side, I shall say it has not had a fair chance for its life. However, I have no room at present for observations of this sort. The jester will doubtless pass part of his time in chatting with his respected and beloved old friend in Richmond Park, and when I can find time, I will walk down and partake of their edifying reflections; for I mean to give up writing very soon and confine myself entirely to chat. We will stroll about amongst the fern and hawthorn bushes. We will philosophize upon *toad-stools* and *mush-*

rooms; forbearing, however, any odious similes; we will stand poring over the fairy rings, and lament that the time is gone by when a belief in fairies and witches made part of that set of notions which produced a "holy and high-minded submission to the laws." God knows what we will not talk about; but, prepare yourselves Gentlemen; for my tongue is hung upon wires.

NORFOLK MEETING.

THIS was something like a Meeting. I have no room to do it justice here, nor any thing like justice. But, I will just observe, that it was a County Meeting convened by the Sheriff; called by men hitherto supporters of the Ministers, and who now manfully disavowed their measures; that these Gentlemen proposed, amongst other things, a repeal of Peel's Bill; that it was finally agreed on to petition for a *reduction of the taxes and a reform of the Parliament*; and that Mr. WOODHOUSE, who and whose family have supported the Pitt system for upwards of thirty years, fairly and candidly and manfully made what must be taken as a *recantation*. This is the thing that frightens the Ministers. The plain question is, with such men as Mr. Woodhouse; shall we turn against the system, or lose our estates? They may bogle a little at first; but in a very short time, they will decide against being carried to the poor-house; for to that poor-house they must go, or give us our rights; and this is what I have for years and years said that it would come to.